



**Needlework Patterns**  
**from**  
**Renaissance Germany**

designs recharted by Kathryn Newall  
from  
**Schön Neues Modelbuch**  
**1597**

# Needlework Patterns from Renaissance Germany

designs recharted by Kathryn Newall\* from  
Johan Sibmacher's  
Schön Neues Modelbuch  
1597

\*known in the Society For Creative Anachronism as  
Baroness Kathryn Goodwyn, OZ



# Dedication

I dedicate this work to Kim Brody Salazar, known in the Society For Creative Anachronism as Countess Ianthé, D'Averoigne. Kim has generously shared her knowledge of needlework with me for over 20 years. This included informing me of Arthur Lotz's, **Bibliographie der modelbücher**. Without this source I would never have known that the 1597 edition of Sibmacher even existed.

# Acknowledgments

The following people were of great help to me with this book, and deserve special mention and thanks:

Franz Hackler of Germany, who responded to an email plea in a spirit of extraordinary international goodwill. It is solely due to his amazing kindness that this book you are holding exists at all. I only wish I could give him American hamburger he so ardently desires!

Steven Blowney, known in the SCA as Baron Sir Mord Hrutsson the Green, who is an interlibrary loan specialist. He happily instituted a search to find a facsimile copy of the 1597 Sibmacher East of the Rockies. Although he was unable to find a copy, I truly appreciate the time and effort he expended.

Kerri Canepa, known in the SCA as Mistress Cedrin Etainnighean, an email friend living in Alaska who is also a librarian. She did her best to find me a copy of the 1597 Sibmacher West of the Rockies. I appreciate her taking time from her duties to assist me.

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# The Journey Towards This Book

In 1975 Dover Publications reissued Johan Sibmacher's, **Newes Modelbuch Inn Druck verfertigt**, taken from an 1880 facsimile edition of the work originally published in Nuremberg in 1604. Many of us in the SCA\* chapter to which I belonged eagerly bought this book and enjoyed using the patterns.

In 1983 Kim Brody Salazar published her second book on needlework for the SCA, **Counted Thread Patterns From Before 1600**. Within this book were some patterns from Sibmacher that I had not seen before. Intrigued, I asked her where she had found them, and she told me of a book by Arthur Lotz called **Bibliographie der modelbücher**. I assumed, without seeing Lotz, that the Sibmacher patterns she had were probably from an earlier edition of the 1604 book. My experience with Italian books showed that these pattern books could vary from edition to edition, with the addition or subtraction of various designs.

In 1983 I found facsimiles of Italian needlework pattern books and in 1985 published these as a collection called **Flowers of the Needle**. At this time I didn't know of any German pattern books except the 1604 Sibmacher. In 1987 I finally got to view a copy of Lotz at the Philadelphia Public Library but the Sibmacher plates there still didn't catch my attention as I was concentrating on Italian pattern books. I had, in intervening years, briefly seen a copy of Margaret Abegg's marvelous book **Apropos Patterns**, but I was focused on my Italian quest, and only marginally noted her plates from the 1597 Sibmacher. I assumed, again, they were basically from an earlier edition of the 1604 book.

Two things finally caught my attention in 1995. The first was seeing a copy of Averil Colby's book, **Samplers**. Ms. Colby had hand drawn two plates from the 1597 Sibmacher and also offered the information that the book had been republished in facsimile in 1877. The second was the publication of Kim's book **The New Carolingian Modelbook**. I was truly surprised at the plates she had recharted from the 1597 Sibmacher, I took another look in Abegg and Lotz. It had finally become clear to me that the 1597 Sibmacher was a different book from the 1604 edition by Dover.

My next step was to engage the favors of librarians Steven Blowney and Kerri Canepa. Once they assured me they could not find any copies in the United States of either edition, I reached a serious obstacle. I turned to cyberspace and made contact with Franz Hackler in Bavaria. He kindly went over to the State Library and informed me of two facts: they had an original 16th century edition, kept in a vault; they had a copy of the 1877 facsimile.

The result was that inside of a month I had, in my own hands, a photocopy of the 1877 edition. When I opened it I held my breath, worrying it would be mostly identical to the Dover reprint. To my relief and joy, not one pattern was the same! Some were similar, indeed, but not one pattern from the 1597 Sibmacher is the same as the 1604 book reprinted by Dover (now, sadly, out of print). I now knew for certain they were two totally different books. The next step for me was to chart the patterns for the modern embroiderer - me!

By 1998 my plans expanded to include publishing my modern charts of the 1597 Sibmacher. I printed them out at home, designed a very nice cover and off I went to the local copy shop. Shortly after this I met Mary Denise Smith of Costume & Dressmaker Press. Mary Denise persuaded me to expand my horizons and the result is the book you hold in your hand. It is my first formally published work, and the experience has encouraged me to look to a future that includes an updated **Flowers Of The Needle**, and **The Goodwyn Miscellany**. I'll be busy - delightfully so!



# The Charted Patterns

I did all my work in **Pattern Maker for cross stitch**™. Recharting these patterns for modern use was not without several interesting technical problems. One such problem was the St. George and the Dragon pattern on page 24. The repeat is not true. The tree on the left does not duplicate itself properly on the right, as I found to my chagrin when doing the embroidery. Kim Salazar chose to remain as true as she could to the original, which makes for a skinny but acceptable tree on the right. I was influenced, however, by Plate 154 in **Apropos Patterns**, which shows an extant embroidered linen towel worked in this pattern with a slightly more substantial tree on the right. I ended up recharting it several times, amid much tearing of hair. One might do better by sticking strictly to the original chart.

The two most problematic pages were 17 and 16. Page 17 shows a rarity - patterns charted on the diagonal. To make matters worse, two diagonal charts were combined with a regular gridded chart on the bottom. I had to chart them as diagonal patterns, with much craning of my neck!

Several pages were charted for two colors, which I found fascinating, although such charts occur in the 1604 book as well. I have never seen this in Italian pattern books. I chose to interpret this in red and black, which is very traditional for Germanic/Eastern European folk embroidery (blue and red is another traditional combination).

Now you, Gentle Reader, can enjoy holding and using a pattern book which is barely known in the United States. I hope the fruits of my personal quest find fulfillment in your embroidery projects. As you use them, think of the 16th century ladies who found great personal contentment in their projects, too.

## The Society For Creative Anachronism

Gentle Reader, you may be confused by the names and titles used in these introductory notes. **The Society for Creative Anachronism** (SCA) is a social organization with strong educational overtones. Within the framework of the SCA many of us research and practice the various arts, crafts, and sciences of a time period which roughly covers the Dark Ages through the early 17th century. Virtually every form of needlework is researched and practiced, sometimes to the highest of standards.

Some of our scholars write for modern publications, or give lectures at such prestigious modern events as the Medieval University every year at Kalamazoo, Michigan. Others, like myself, publish their research, as well as teach formally or informally, within the SCA or the modern world. We wax very enthusiastic over our areas of interest and will eagerly share our research with people of like mind.

The SCA has an award structure which can result in titles, such as my own as Baroness. The highest level an artisan may attain is that of becoming a Master or Mistress of the Laurel, signified by the initials "OL".

I hope this brief introduction will minimize any confusion you may feel. No matter what century attracts you the most, I hope you find the patterns I have worked on delightful enough to inspire wonderful projects of your own.



# Annotated Bibliography

Abegg, Margaret, *Apropos Patterns for Embroidery, Lace, and Woven Textiles*, Schriften Der Abegg-Stiftung, Bern, 1978 ISBN 3-7272-9005-6

A superlative book for needlework research. The first half of the book concentrates on 16th and 17th century patterns as shown in paintings, pattern books and extant examples of needlework. The second half is devoted to 18th and 19th century needlework and textile patterns. Ms. Abegg gives exhaustive detail of the history and publishing of the various pattern books and their influence on needlework of the time. What I find most fascinating were the examples shown from pattern books accompanied by photos of extant needlework done directly from the pattern shown. This book is richly illustrated with many important plates, photos, designs and charts of historical patterns and is quite a treasure trove.

Colby, Averil, *Samplers, Yesterday and Today*, B.T. Batsford, London, c.1964, formerly published as *Samplers*, by Charles T. Branford Company, Newton Center, Massachusetts. No ISBN

This was the book which made me aware of the 1597 Sibmacher and of the 1877 facsimile. The author's concentration on patterns common on samplers over the centuries makes it a good basic research book. The 16th and 17th centuries have entire chapters devoted to style, and several redrawings of patterns are included.

Dover, *Baroque Charted Designs for Needlework*, (facsimile printing of Johan Sibmacher's *Newes Modelbuch* Inn Druck verfertigt, Nuremberg, 1604] published from the 1880 printed facsimile) Dover Publications, Inc., NY 1975. ISBN 0-486-23186-0

This as a straight facsimile, with translations of the original title page and dedication. The 1880 facsimile they worked from was published with the title *Kreuzstitch-Muster, 36 Tafeln er Ausgabe* v. 1604, publisher Ernst Wasmuth, Berlin

Epstein, Kathleen, *German Renaissance Patterns for Embroidery: A Facsimile Copy of Nicholas Bassée's "New Modelbuch" of 1568*, Curious Works Press, Austin, Texas, 1994. ISBN 0-963333-1-4-3

This is, to my knowledge, the only full facsimile of a German needlework pattern book currently published (many were published in the 19th century). Ms. Epstein had access to an original copy housed in the rare book collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago, Illinois. The introduction to this book provides some very good information about the publishing of needlework pattern books in Germany in the 16th century, and includes translations of German terms for various needlework, and any text which occurs in the book. A short but choice bibliography is included.

Hersh, Tandy and Charles, *Samplers of the Pennsylvania Germans*, Birdsboro, PA, The Pennsylvania German Society, 1991 ISBN 09-11122-58-3

I discovered this book through happenstance. I was helping someone research 19th century Victorian dance, and the private library had a copy of it. Illustrations include a sampler attributed to Germany, first half of the 16th century, and a Swiss sampler of 1634 which contains many patterns recognizable as being from the 1597 and 1604 Sibmacher books. I have since seen photos of 18th century samplers and embroidery in other books on German needlework

and have recognized patterns from both Sibmacher books. I have often heard claims that certain techniques or patterns are “timeless”. This is one example of patterns fossilized by the needleworkers’ true love of good design.

Hofer, Hans, *Ain New Formbuech’len der Weyssen Arbeyt*, Augsburg, 1545 facsimile copy, reprinted in 1913 by F. Ullmann Zwickauer and in 1968 by Miland Publishers, Nieuwkoop. No ISBN

My copy of this book was obtained from the 1968 facsimile, owned by the Philadelphia Public Library (Art Department). The University of Pennsylvania owns a copy of this edition and the 1913 facsimile. I thank Rosemary Stecher (Lady Mathilde Eschenbach) for this. It is a fairly typical modelbuch, with only a few pages of charted designs The rest are for needle lace and linear embroidery.

Lotz, Arthur, *Bibliographie der Modelbücher*, Leipzig, 1933 No ISBN

The copy I originally used for research was in the Philadelphia Free Library, Main branch. This book was subsequently lost, but the University of Pennsylvania has the copy I used to copy all the plates for my files. The text is in German and appears to list the various 16th century pattern books title by title, with author and edition date. The text is extensive, and I am not sure it is worthwhile to copy it unless you are fluent in German. The plates are marvelous - a title page from a pattern book is shown, then a sample page or two. There are 108 plates in all.

Paludan, Charlotte & Lone de Hemmer Egeberg, *98 Monsterbøger Til Broderi, Knipling, og Strikning* (98 Pattern Books for Embroidery, Lace, and Knitting), Det Danske Kunstindustrimuseum, 1991 ISBN 87-87075-768

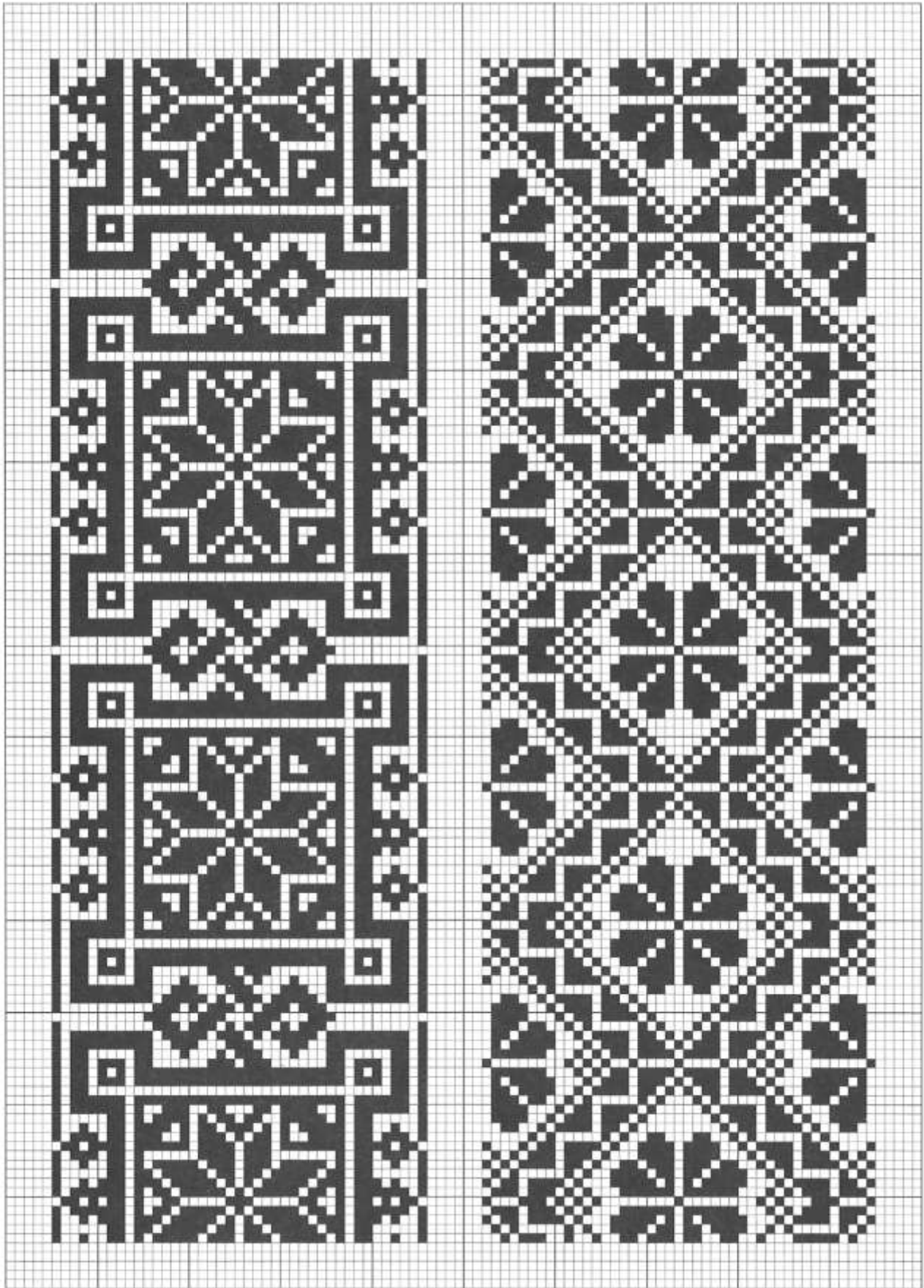
Thankfully this book has English translation of text and captions. This is not as large or as ambitious a book as Abegg’s, but it is similar in its subject and scope. The text is very useful for the full citations of pattern books. The plates from pattern books as well as photos of extant pieces of needlework made from some of the designs make this book especially valuable for research.

Salazar, Kim Brody (writing as lanthé d’Averoigne) *The New Carolingian Modelbook*, Outlaw Press, Albuquerque, NM 1995 ISBN 0-964-2082-29

This 1995 work incorporates most of the content of her earlier books, *Blackwork* (1978) and *Counted Thread Patterns From Before 1600* (1983) with many additions and expansions. Meticulous documentation is provided, with patterns originating in Italian, German and French 16th century pattern books. Two bibliographies are given: one for modern works and one for 16th century works. Among patterns recharted from German modelbuchen are the earliest ones, by Schonsperger, Quentel, and Engenolff, as well as some patterns from the 1597 Sibmacher. A glossary is provided of needlework terminology, which includes some German terms.







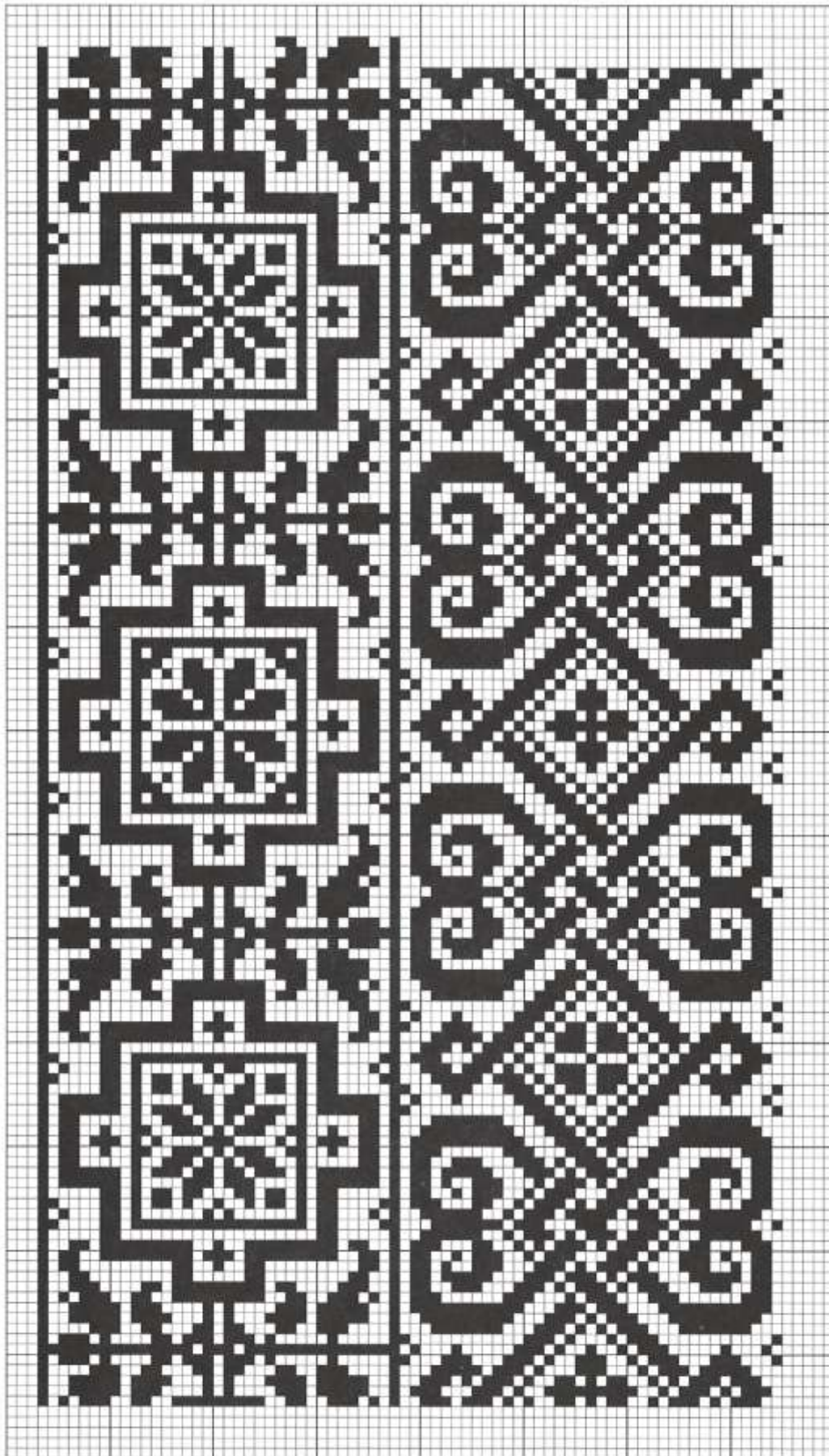
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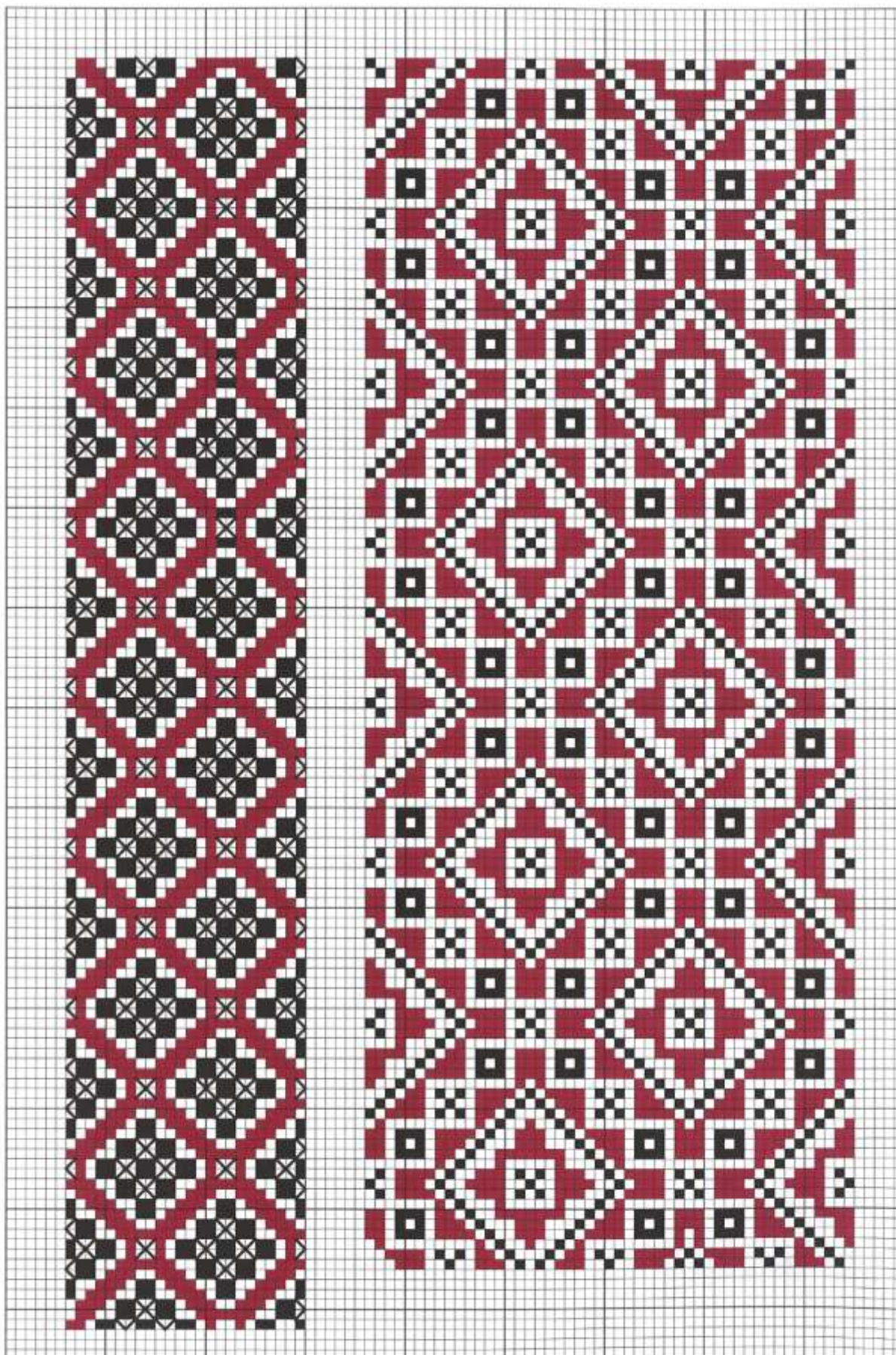
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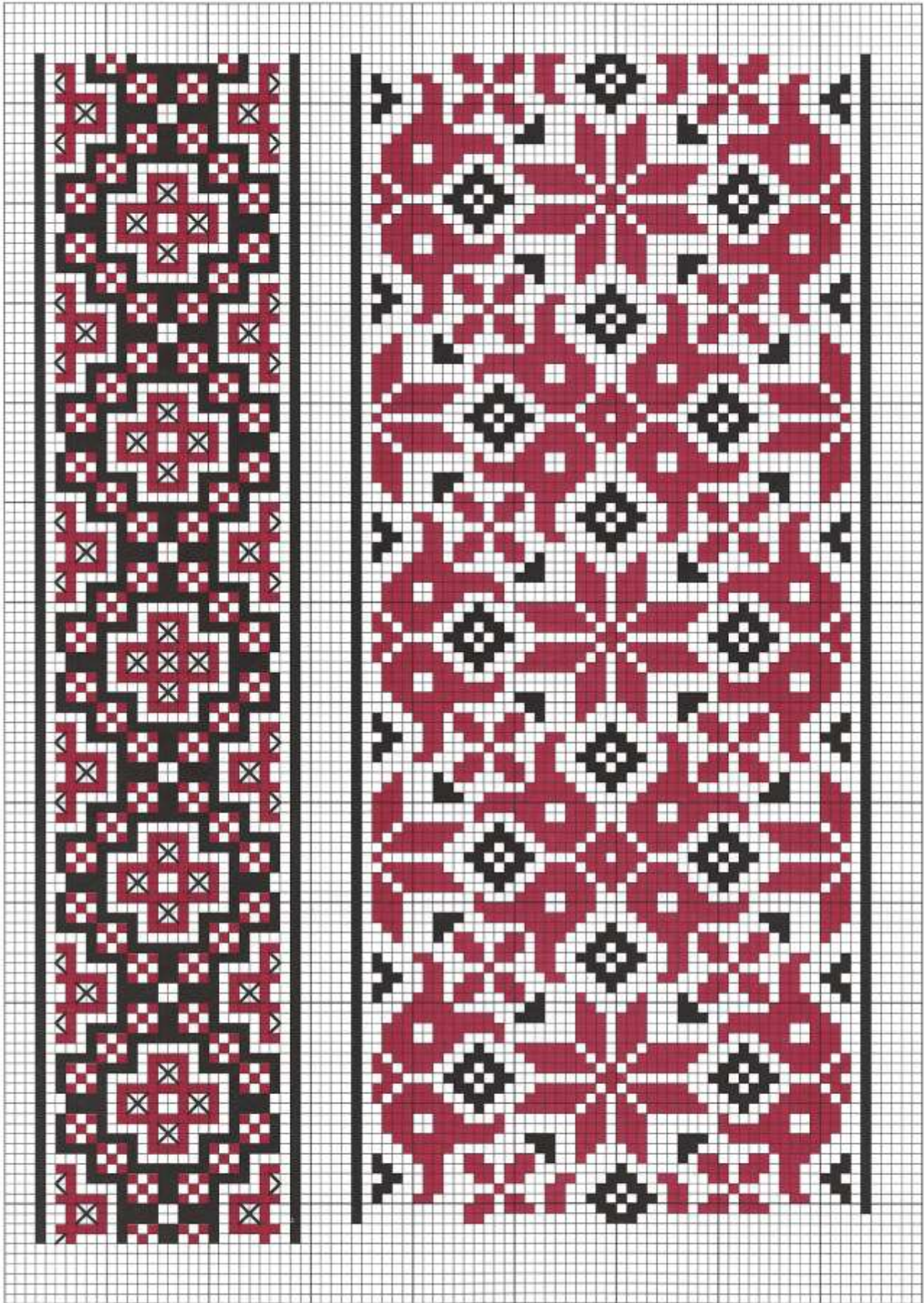
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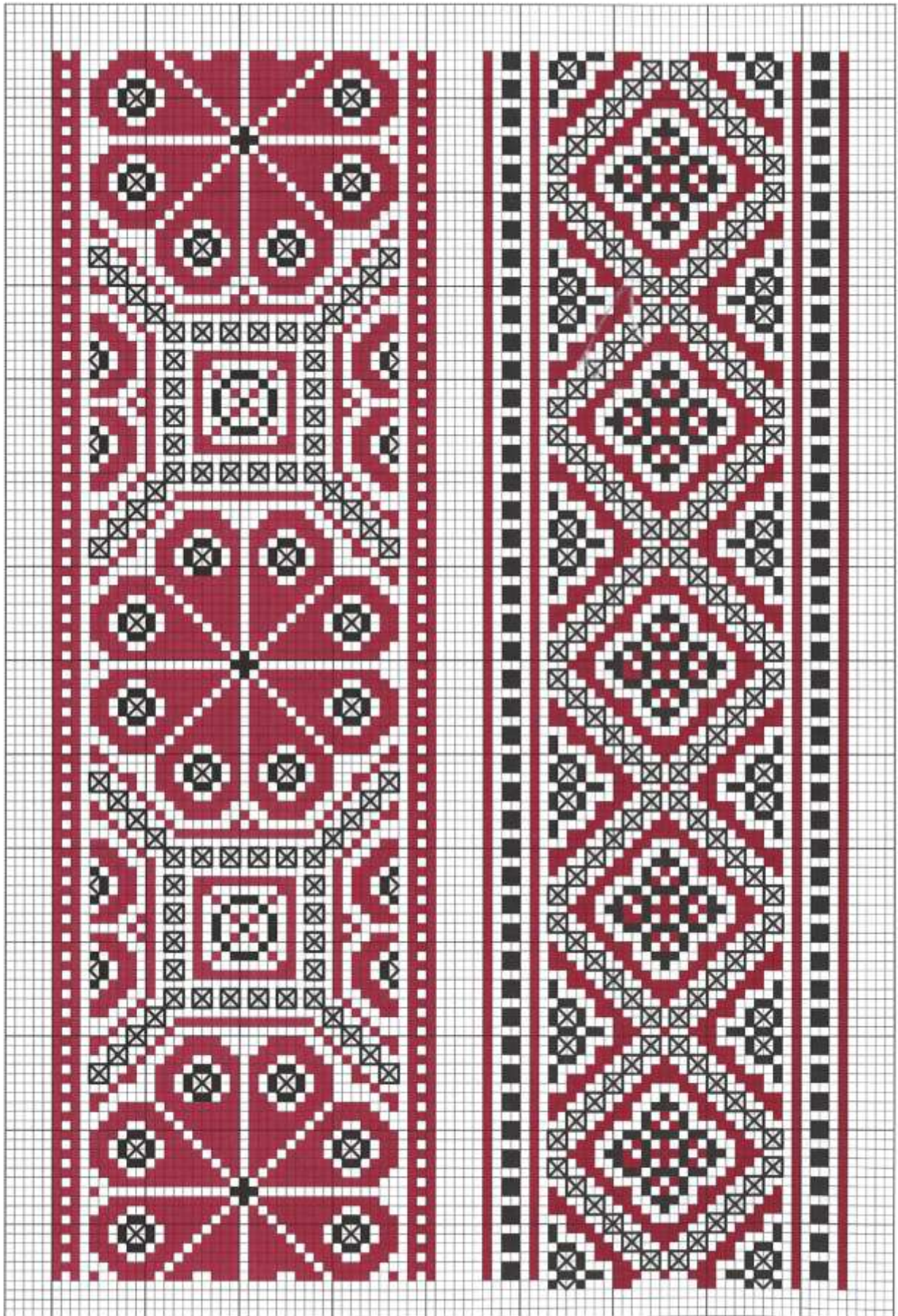
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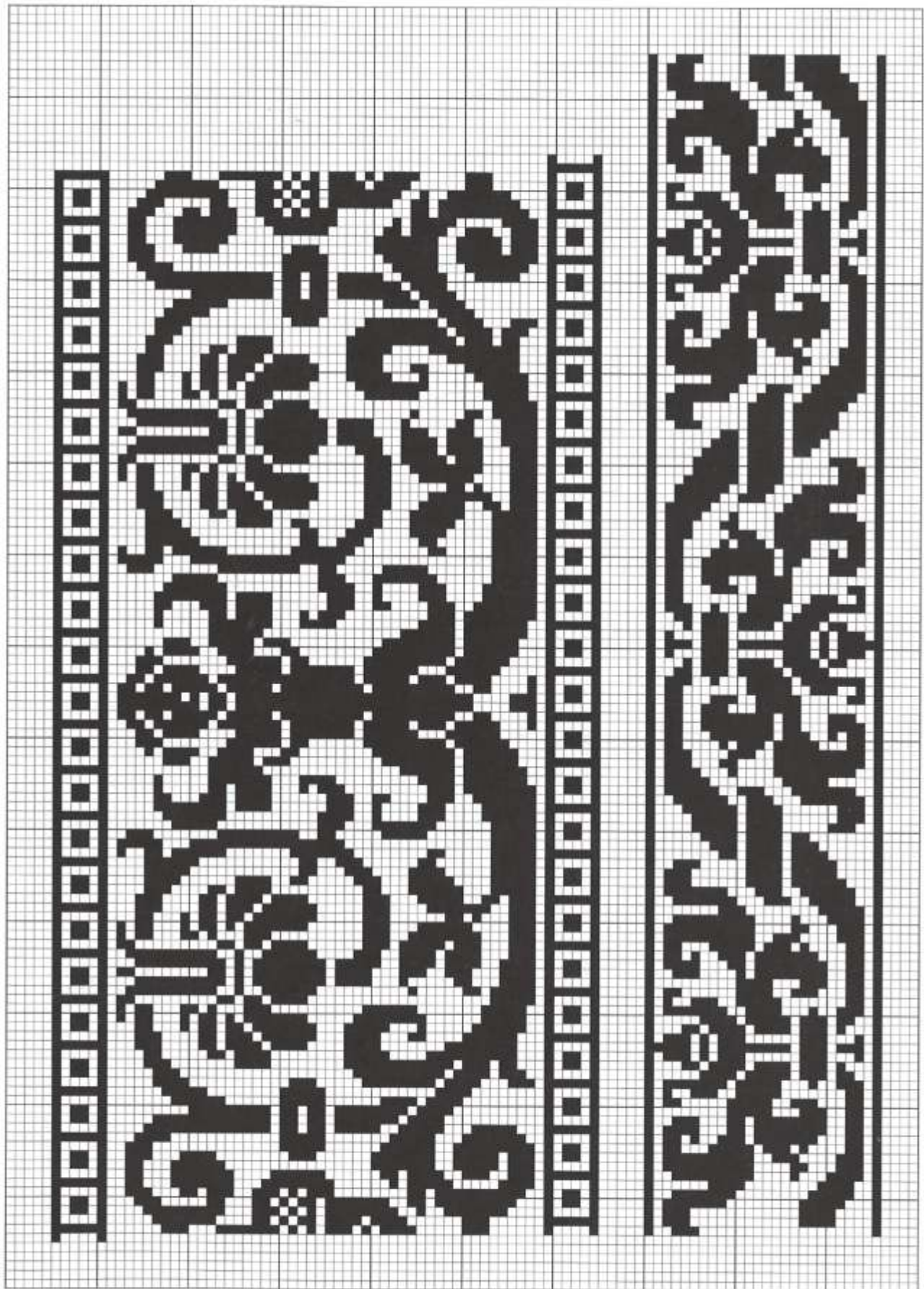
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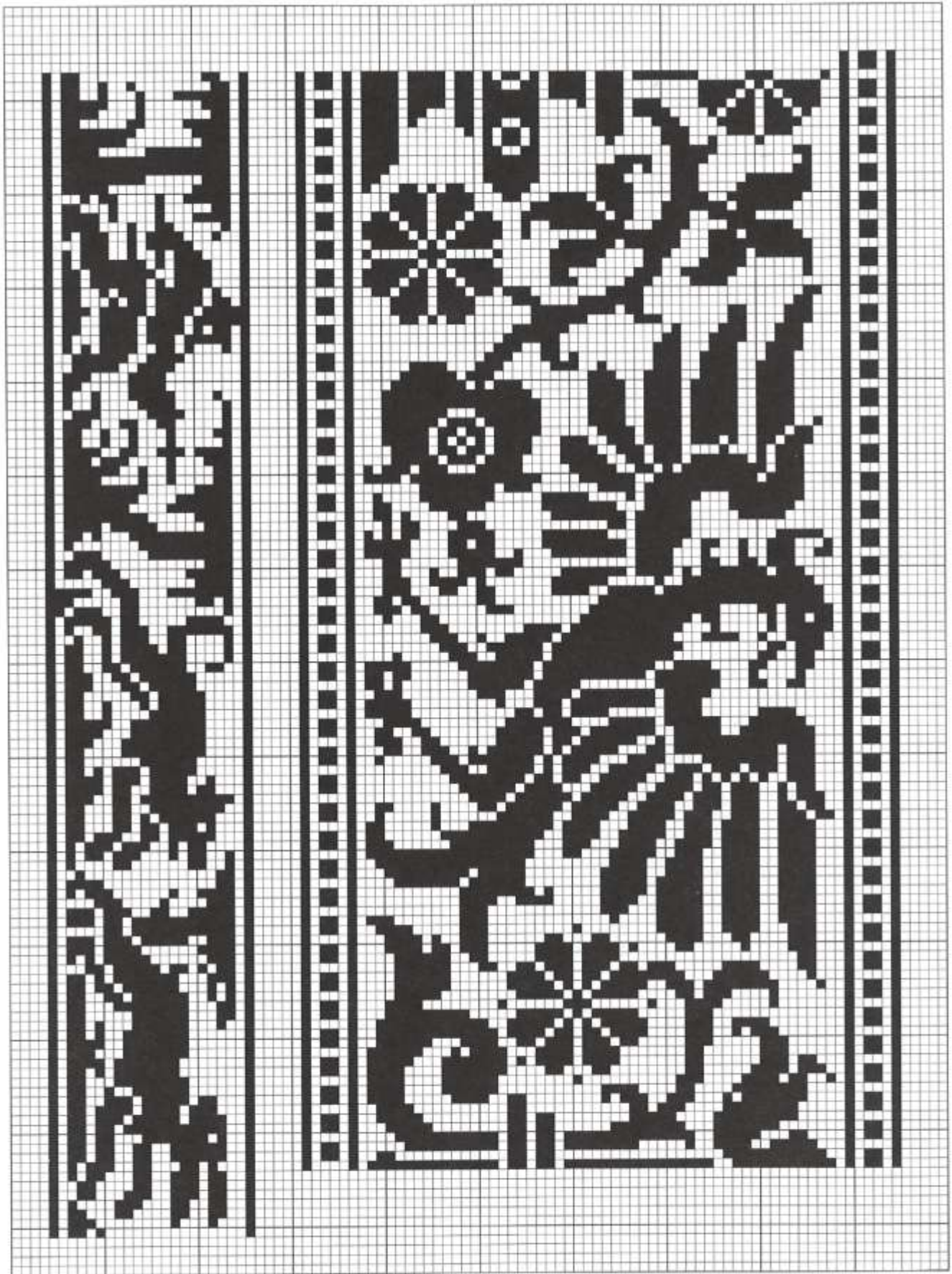


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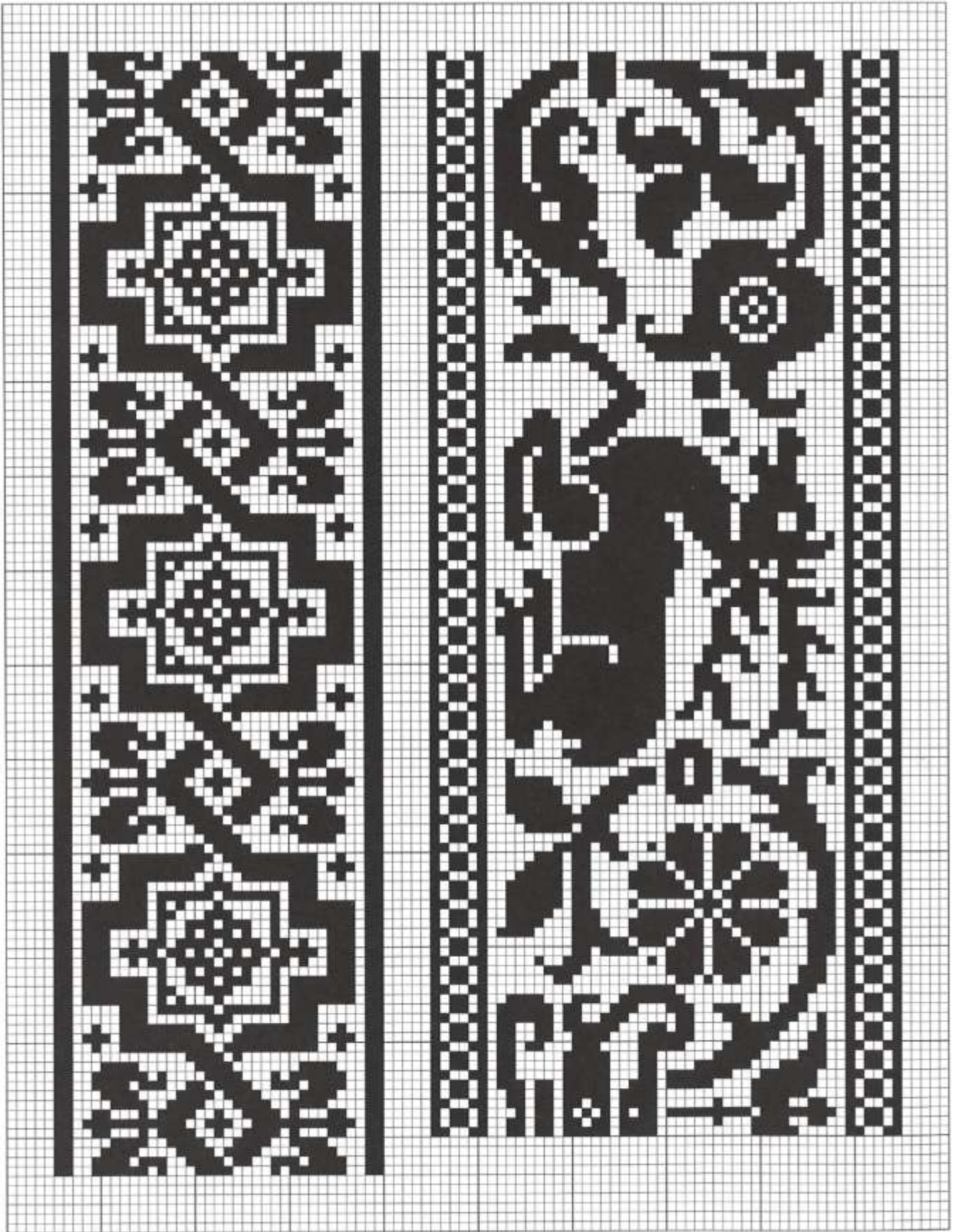


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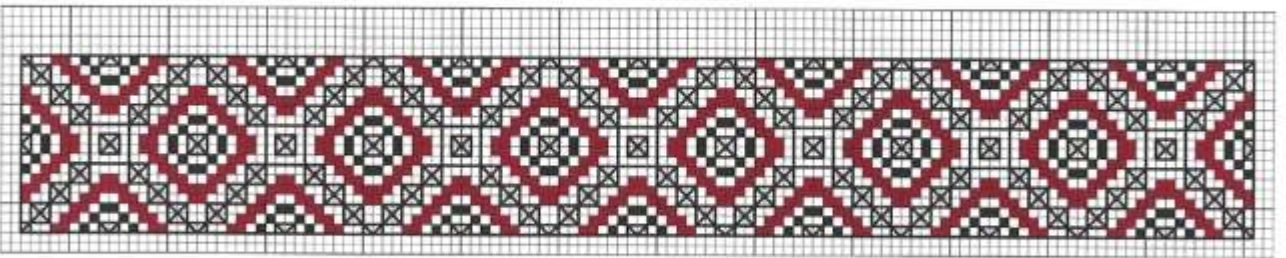












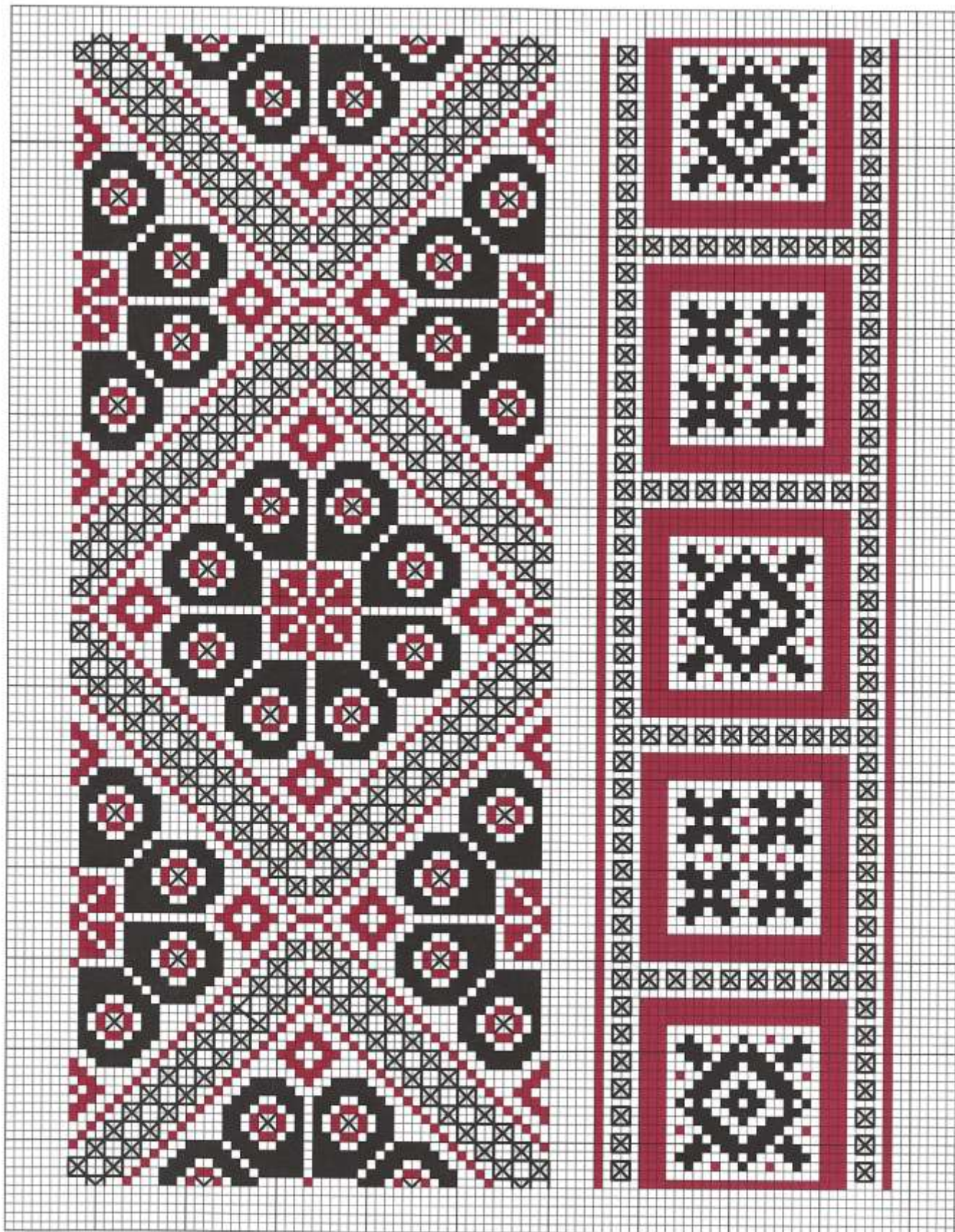
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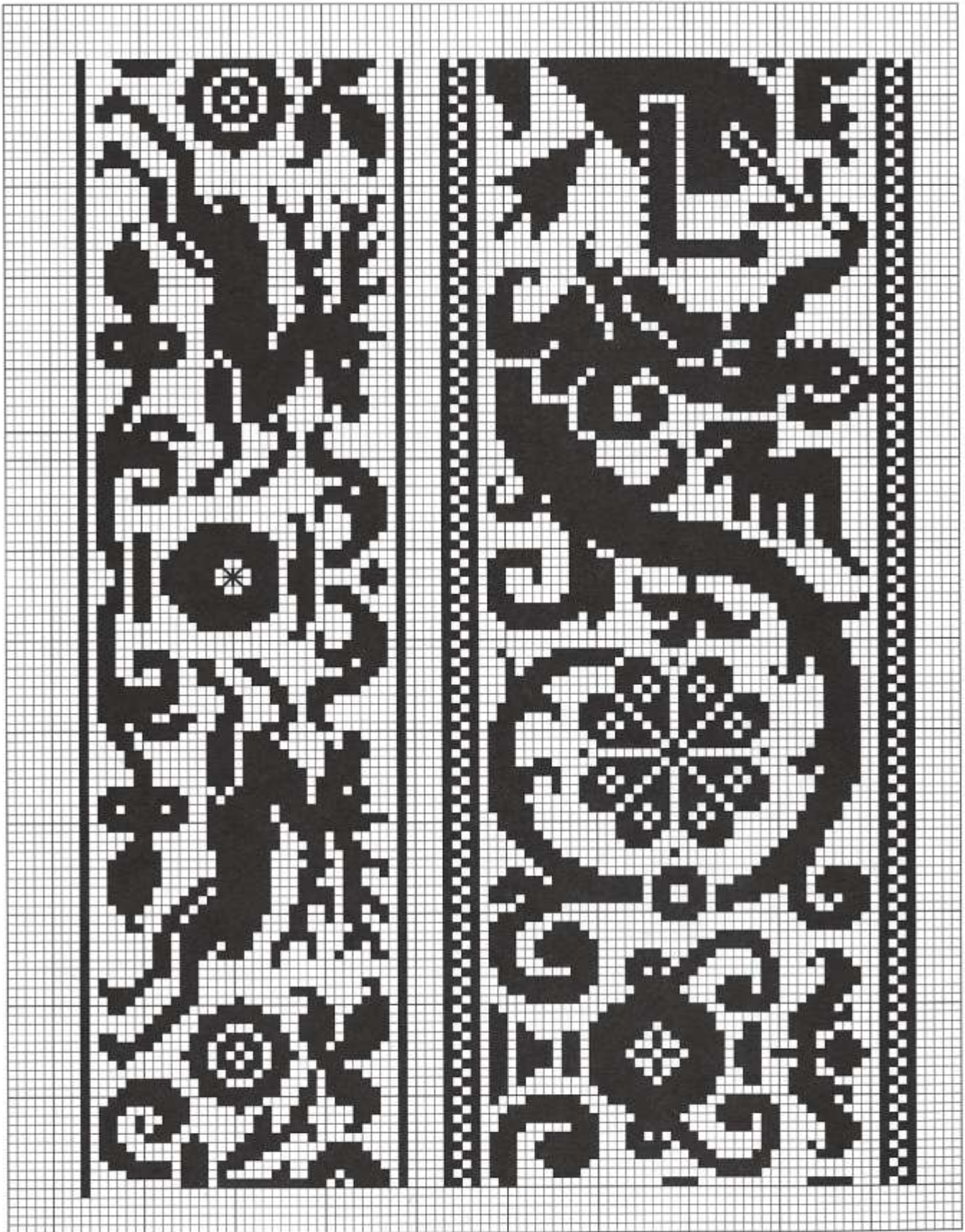




















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